

REMARKS

This Response is submitted in reply to the Final Office Action dated August 27, 2003 and in accordance with the personal interview courteously granted by the Examiner on November 3, 2003. Claims 1, 8, 15 and 22 have been amended. Claims 30, 31, 32 and 33 have been added. No new matter has been added by any of the amendments made herein. A Request for Continued Examination is submitted herewith. A check in the amount of \$842 is submitted herein to cover the cost of the RCE and the additional claims. Please charge Deposit Account No. 02-1818 for any insufficiency or to credit any overpayment.

Claims 1-5, 7 to 12, 14 to 20, 22 to 27 and 29 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,609,524 to *Inoue* ("*Inoue*"). Claims 6, 13, 21 and 28 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over *Inoue* in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,569,084 to Nicastro et al. ("*Nicastro*"). As discussed during the interview and as set forth in the interview summary record, the claims have been amended to more clearly define the present invention over these references and are limited only to that extent. Additionally, minor changes have been made to clarify the claim language and are not made for the purpose of distinguishing over these references.

Regarding the rejection under §102, amended Claim 1 is directed to a gaming device having a primary game which includes a plurality of independently operable identical sets of reels. Each of the sets of reels has a plurality of reels. A plurality of identical sets of symbols are included on each of the sets of reels. Additionally, a plurality of paylines are associated exclusively with each of the sets of reels where the paylines associated with each of the sets of reels are not associated with any of the reels in any of the other sets of reels. Furthermore, the gaming device includes a display device adapted to simultaneously display the sets of reels. The gaming device also includes a processor which communicates with the display device and enables a player to wager on the paylines associated with the plurality of sets of reels. The processor evaluates each of the sets of reels wagered on by the player for winning combinations of the symbols on any of the paylines and provides payouts the player

based on the combinations of symbols and the player's wager. *Inoue* does not disclose, teach or suggest the combination of elements of amended Claim 1.

Inoue discloses a slot machine including a front door 3 having a display panel 4. The display panel includes nine display windows 5, which are formed in a 3 x 3 matrix arrangement. The slot machine also includes nine reels 8A to 8I which are mounted in the housing 2 and displayed in the windows 5. Each of the reels 8 have a plurality of different symbols. Additionally, there are three horizontal winning lines 6a, three vertical winning lines 6b and two diagonal winning lines 6c and 6d associated with the different windows and/or reels (Fig. 1; Col. 3, lines 25-58). In a game, one token activates the three horizontal winning lines; two tokens activates the three horizontal winning lines and the three vertical winning lines; and three tokens activates all of the winning lines associated with the windows and/or reels. Once the tokens are inserted, a player activates start lever 11 to active or rotate the reels. The slot machine provides an award to the player when a winning combination including at least three symbols is indicated on one of the activated winning lines.

As discussed during the interview and as described above, each set of reels in *Inoue* has a payline associated with said set which is also associated with another set of reels. Thus, *Inoue* does not disclose, teach or suggest a plurality of independently operable identical sets of reels and a plurality of paylines associated exclusively with each of the sets of reels where the paylines associated with each of the sets of reels are not associated with any of the reels in any of the other sets of reels as in the claimed invention.

For these reasons, *Inoue* does not disclose, teach or suggest all of the elements of amended Claim 1. Therefore, amended Claim 1 and Claims 2 to 7, which depend from amended Claim 1, are each patentably distinguished over *Inoue* and are in condition for allowance.

Amended Claim 8 is directed to a gaming device including a plurality of sets of reels where each of the sets of reels are independently displayed to a player. A plurality of identical sets of symbols are included on each of the sets of reels. Additionally, the gaming device includes a plurality of paylines associated exclusively with each of said sets of reels, wherein the paylines associated with each of the sets of reels are not

associated with any of the reels in any of the other sets of reels. The gaming device also includes a display device and a processor. The processor communicates with the display device to simultaneously display the plurality of sets of reels to the player. The processor also enables the player to wager on the paylines associated with plurality of sets of reels and simultaneously spins each of the sets of reels wagered on by the player. The processor then evaluates each of the sets of reels wagered on by the player for predetermined combinations of the symbols and provides a player with any award associated with the predetermined combinations of symbols obtained on the reels. ~~The elements of amended Claim 8 are similar to the elements of Claim 1.~~ Therefore, as stated above for Claim 1, *Inoue* does not disclose, teach or suggest a plurality of paylines associated exclusively with each of a plurality of sets of reels.

For these reasons, amended Claim 8 and Claims 9 to 14, which depend from amended Claim 8, are each patentably distinguished over *Inoue* and are in condition for allowance.

Amended Claim 15 includes similar elements to amended Claims 1 and 8. Specifically, amended Claim 15 includes "a plurality of sets of reels, each set of reels having a plurality of reels, wherein each of said sets of reels are independently displayed to a player." Additionally, amended Claim 15 includes "a plurality of paylines associated exclusively with each of said sets of reels, wherein the paylines associated with each of said sets of reels are not associated with any of the reels in any of the other of said sets of reels." For the reasons provided above, *Inoue* does not disclose, teach or suggest a plurality of paylines associated exclusively with each of a plurality of sets of reels, where the paylines associated with each of the sets of reels are not associated with any of the reels in any of the other sets of reels. Thus, amended Claim 15 and Claims 16 to 21, which depend from amended Claim 15, are each patentably distinguished over *Inoue* and are in condition for allowance.

Amended Claim 22 is directed to a gaming device having a primary game including a plurality of sets of reels where each set of reels has a plurality of reels and where each of the sets of reels are independently displayed to a player. A plurality of symbols which are identical are included on each of the sets of reels. Additionally, a plurality of paylines are associated exclusively with each of the sets of reels, where the

paylines associated with each of the sets of reels are not associated with any of the reels in any of the other sets of reels. The gaming device also includes a display device adapted to simultaneously display the sets of reels in a processor. The processor controls the display device and enables the player to wager on at least one of the sets of reels having a winning symbol or a combination of symbols on any of the paylines associated with the set of reels. Amended Claim 22 includes similar elements to amended Claims 1, 8 and 15 described above. Therefore, for the reasons provided above, amended Claim 22 and Claims 23 to 28, which depend from amended Claim 22 are each patentably distinguished over *Inoue* and are in condition for allowance.

Claim 6 was rejected under §103(a). Claim 6 depends from amended Claim 1. Applicant respectfully submits that Claim 6 is allowable for at least the reasons set forth above with respect to amended Claim 1 because the combination of *Inoue* and *Nicastro* does not disclose, teach or suggest the novel element of Claim 6 in combination with the novel elements of amended Claim 1. For these reasons, Claim 6 is patentably distinguished over the combination of *Inoue* and *Nicastro*.

Claims 13 was rejected under §103(a). Claim 13 depends from amended Claim 8. Applicant respectfully submits that Claim 13 is allowable for at least the reasons set forth above with respect to amended Claim 8 because the combination of *Inoue* and *Nicastro* does not disclose, teach or suggest the novel element of Claim 13 in combination with the novel elements of amended Claim 8. For these reasons, Claim 13 is patentably distinguished over the combination of *Inoue* and *Nicastro*.

Claims 21 was rejected under §103(a). Claim 21 depends from amended Claim 15. Applicant respectfully submits that Claim 21 is allowable for at least the reasons set forth above with respect to amended Claim 15 because the combination of *Inoue* and *Nicastro* does not disclose, teach or suggest the novel element of Claim 21 in combination with the novel elements of amended Claim 15. For these reasons, Claim 21 is patentably distinguished over the combination of *Inoue* and *Nicastro*.

Claim 28 was rejected under §103(a). Claim 28 depends from amended Claim 22. Therefore, Applicant respectfully submits that Claim 28 is allowable for at least the reasons set forth above with respect to amended Claim 22 because *Inoue* and *Nicastro* do not disclose, teach or suggest the novel element of Claim 28 in combination

with the novel elements of amended Claim 22. For these reasons, Claim 28 is patentably distinguished over the combination of *Inoue* and *Nicastro* and in condition for allowance.

New Claims 30, 31, 32 and 33 depend from independent Claims 1, 8, 15 and 22, respectively. Therefore, for the same reasons provided above, Claims 30, 31, 32 and 33 are each patentably distinguished from the references cited in the Office Action and are in condition for allowance.

An earnest endeavor has been made to place this application in condition for formal allowance and in the absence of more pertinent art such action is courteously solicited. If the Examiner has any questions regarding this Response, Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner contact the undersigned attorney.

Respectfully submitted,

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